DECORATIVE TEXTILES OF THE LOUIS XV PERIOD, AS INFLUENCED BY COURT LIFE OF THAT ERA

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Textile styles are a product of society. Many factors such as political, economic, social, and technological environments mold society. Together and separately they influence the textile styles of a given era. One way to understand styles is to view them in relation to a phase of their environment. The purpose of this study is to show the influence of court life [1] on textiles used in interior decor[1] of the Louis XV period.

The Louis XV period, 1715-1774, encompasses the greatest part of the eighteenth century, which has been heralded as the most brilliant age of art in France. Decorative art of the eighteenth century is still highly influential and can be found in present-day interiors in various forms such as prized art and antiques from this time or by the many contemporary adaptations and reproductions of furniture, textiles, art, and accessories of the commonly called "French Provincial" style.

A brief historical background introduces the reader to court life during the Louis XV period, to Louis XV as a person, and to other individuals who influenced decorative styles of that time. The study is divided into two major sections. The first explains the nature of textile styles and is separated into the following categories: types of

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[1] Court life, for purposes of this study, is defined as the social life of those attending the court of the King.

fabrics, motifs and designs, typical colors, and production. The second section describes the structure of Louis XV interiors and deals specifically with textiles used in interior decoration, such as upholstery, drapery, and wall treatments. The influence of court life is discussed throughout both sections and is illustrated by photographs of fabrics and interiors. These objects are described and their significance to the times explained. Rare or unusual objects have been avoided; examples which appeared to be representative of the era were selected.

The information on textiles and interior decoration has been obtained by perusal of books and articles on textiles, furniture, interior decoration, costume, and art. Historical and sociological books provided specific information on court life. Since there is a great deal of literature concerning the Louis XV period, volumes listed or quoted frequently in different sources were used, the assumption being that these would be the most authoritative works. Supplementary studies of the Louis XV period (1643-1715) and the Louis XVI period (1774-1793) provided historical background and characteristics which aided in distinguishing Louis XV period textiles from those of the preceding and succeeding styles.

Knowledge of the factors which served as impetus to decorative styles is helpful to an interior designer in creating interiors truly representative of a traditional style or in harmonizing various styles. For the person teaching period styles, this information is a means of providing historical information as explanation of styles, of adding interest to detailed subject matter, and of helping students examine styles as reflectors of society.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Louis XV came to the throne of France in 1715, at the age of five, after the death of his grandfather, Louis XIV. Regent Phillip d' Orleans controlled the state during the years of the young King's minority. When the Regent died in 1723, Louis XV began ruling and appointed Cardinal Fleury as his chief advisor. According to Guérard (1959), page 192, "As long as Fleury lived, until 1743, France was in good hands economically and to a certain extent politically." A mark of prosperity was reached and probably could have continued had Fleury possessed the necessary control over the dissolute young King and his extravagant court.

Louis XV has been described as a vain, idle, immoral man totally lacking the greatness and especially the governing ability of his grandfather. As a result, the authority of the absolute monarchy began to decline. The exercise of supreme power became more arbitrary and the confidence and respect of the people in their King became more unsettled. Louis XV kept the reign of government in his own hands, but paid little attention to his responsibilities.

A just idea cannot be formed of the character of the French monarch without considering his modes of life, his social surroundings, and the barriers of etiquette within which he was encased. Perkins (1897) describes the attention the King constantly received on pages 4 and 5

of Volume I:

> There was, perhaps, no other person in the world who was so constantly kept in sight, whose every act was attended with such publicity, as the French King. From his rising in the morning to his retiring at night, he was surrounded by a host of attendants; he dressed and dined in public; in health and sickness, during his devotions and on his death-bed, he had about him the same multitude of courtiers. As it was their business to be smiling and respectful, so it was his business to be smiling and affable, and neither King nor courtier had much time left for anything else.
>
> Who should dress him and undress him, serve him at his table, hand him his cane, offer him his gloves, pray for his welfare, pronounce upon him heaven's blessing, was regulated with an anxious eye.
>
> Those who were received at court there spent their life; they listened to the sayings and watched the countenance of the sovereign; the opportunity of a word with him was a sufficient reward for hours of waiting. It was not strange that this should be so. From the favor of one man came rank, dignity, and wealth; the ambition of the statesman for office, the zeal of the soldier for promotion, the desire for social prominence, the thirst for money, could all be satisfied by the monarch.

The King seemed little interested in anything but court frivolity, personal luxuries, and the pleasures of his mistresses, who held great power in France at this time. It is said that if the state officials enjoyed the favor of the royal mistresses, their offices yielded great power and rich benefits. The influence of such women seems to have been the chief scandal of Louis XV's reign even though mistresses were an integral part of the government system.

When a teen-ager, Louis XV was married for political reasons to Marie Leszczynski, the daughter of a dethroned Polish King. She was considerably older than he, and has been described as a rather dull person. She did provide him with ten children in as many years, and thus kept firm control over her position as Queen of France even though other ladies favored by the King held the more prominent positions within the court.

The general character of eighteenth century court life is expressed perfectly by Cheney (1926), on page 114: "Grandeur without seriousness, elegant manners without sincerity, a continual masquerade-- such were the background and motivation of art in Le Grande Siecle." Wealth and power, concentrated at the court and spreading to a privileged few who lived through its favors, created a society founded on leisure, gaiety, and elegance. The period is described thereby:

> The Royal Court, which was maintained at Versailles on a scale of reckless magnificence, became a favorite object for criticism. However, much more serious was the intrigue, vice and licentiousness existing at the Court. The names of such royal mistresses as Madame de Pompadour and Madame du Barry are indelibly associated with this polished and corrupt society. As a result of the pursuit for mundane pleasures there was an ever-increasing amount of criticism against the Crown, which never ceased until the Monarchy was finally overthrown. The reign of Louis XV was the perfect expression of a voluptuous era spent in the gratification of every kind of refinement and luxury. It was an amorous, artificial and frivolous world dedicated to the enthronement of pleasure. (Roger (1959), p. 118).

This era witnessed the rise of the bourgeoisie to a decisive role as the middle class attained economic, social, and political power. The size and wealth of this class was greatly swelled by people from such professions as finance, law, merchandizing, and farming.

In social and cultural prestige France was at her highest, even though the reign of Louis XV is pictured as one of corruption and extravagance. The country suffered from wars, diplomatic failures, and rising financial costs-- the major burden of which fell upon the lower classes. Yet, the country knew internal peace along with decadence and, generally speaking, the period was one of expanding prosperity. (Guérard (1959), p. 202).

CHAPTER III

TEXTILES

Early in the reign of Louis XV, the aristocracy developed a dislike for the pompous and formal manner of living which had been required during the previous period. The court followers had grown weary of the dull religious life forced upon them. They aspired to a life of leisure, comfort, sociability, and even relative intimacy. The period was one of extravagance, luxury, and license in living-- a complete throwing off of the dignified rules of the previous period. The formal grandeur of the former reign turned to gaiety, romance, and freedom, in an era key-noted by pleasure. Hunter and Hamlin describe this mode of life as reflected in textiles: "The styles of Louis XV are a reaction from grandeur towards grace, from formalism towards naturalism, from heroic to human." (Hunter (1918), p. 47).

> The textile styles of Louis XV reflected the courtiers protest against tradition, ceremony, and grandeur, against academic classicalism, and above all against royal dictation. The textile styles turned to free unhampered designs of gaiety and light heartedness expressed in the Rococo. (Hamlin (1923), p. 256).

The term "Rococo", is virtually synonymous with the Louis XV style. Rococo decoration was elegant, highly sophisticated, and composed of fantastic ornamentation. The Rococo style is characterized by various forms of rock and shell ornamentation and by extravagant use of curves and scrolls. Hunter (1918), on page 48, broadens the usual "rock and shell" definition of Rococo to include naturalistic motifs borrowed from

trees, plants, and other objects, especially when the treatment is unsymmetrical. The asymmetrical designs of Rococo textiles are in direct opposition to the symmetry of the Louis XIV Baroque patterns. Rococo textiles perfected "contrasted balance", in which no two corners of a scrolled pattern were alike. The illusion of symmetry was obtained by balanced masses rather than by identical details. Simplicity of subject matter and spontaneity of treatment were admired more than formal composition. Rhythmic free-flowing lines were inspired by the undulating outlines of shells. Faultless execution of design also was a mark of Rococo textile styles.

Types of Fabrics

The distinction between dress and decorative fabrics which exists today did not hold true in the eighteenth century. Frequently, the same fabric and design appeared in dress and in drapery and upholstery. For both decoration and dress, lightweight, supple textiles were preferred to the heavy, stiff fabrics of the previous period. On page 158, Faniol (1957) explains that only the character of the material gave indication of the purpose for which it was intended, and that differences between fabric selection and purpose were confined to certain technical differences in the manufacturing.

Probably the most admired textiles of the Louis XV period were the exquisite brocades and silk damasks. Also in vogue were plain and figured cut-silk velvets, Utrecht velvets,[2] tapestries, and hand-done

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[2] Utrecht velvet- A velvet with a design formed by cut pile. Usually made either of worsted mohair or mohair and cotton

needlework, such as grospoint or petit-point, which were fashionable pastimes for ladies. Early in the period, painted silk, satin, lampas [3], taffeta, moire' [4], and brocatelle were popular. Later, linen and cotton were widely used.

One of the most interesting stories related to the textiles made in this era is the development of printed cottons and linens. They were so colorful, fresh, and full of interest that the women found many uses for them, particularly as window and bed draperies, but also as upholstery, wall coverings, and dress fabrics. Developments in the textiles industry which help describe the great popularity of cottons are related by Lewis (1937) on page 263:

> The fine decorated cottons imported from India had become so extremely popular in the late seventeenth century that Louis XIV's minister of finance was forced by the impoverished wool merchants to take some step to try to save the wool and silk market. Consequently a royal eddict of 1687 forbade the importations of any more colorful prints and some time later even the sale of domestic copies was prohibited and all the blocks were ordered destroyed. From the time of that ban until well into the eighteenth century many are the stories told of guards stopping people who wore costumes of printed cottons, of seizures in private houses, and of the quantities of these lovely fabrics that were burned. Despite this ban on indiennes, or perhaps because of it, Madame Pompadour, the court favorite, chose that time to furnish an entire room with these bright prints. Then everyone who claimed to be at all in the mode was using printed cottons for walls, curtains, draping beds and dressing tables. The same pattern could be made up for dresses and dressing gowns.

The popularity of cottons was too much for the law to cope with. According to Oglesby (1951), page 171, "Backward and forward the

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[3] lampas- A fabric with a compound weave similar to damask in that the pattern and background are in different weaves.

[4] moire'- Silk with a water-weave surface finish.

pendulum swung for many years, then women and cotton won." The ban was lifted in 1759, legalizing the use of cottons and linens.

Motifs and Designs

Rocks and shells with foliage and flowers dominated the theme of the richly fantastic Rococo textiles. "Designs became gayer and more imaginative, reflecting the increasing influence of women on the life of the period." (Faniel (1957), p. 158).

The feminine influences in the now gay and pleasure-bent court are epitomized in the character of Madame Pompadour. She seems to have had complete control in the conduct of court life through her influence and power over the King. Her smallest caprice was received as law by the ladies in the court. Fashions in decoration and dress revolved around her tastes. Constant change and elaboration in entertainment resulted in a feminine rivalry between Madame Pompadour and her followers in which the motivating purpose seemed to be seduction of the King.

Madame Pompadour's influence on decoration was so powerful that further description of her as a person is necessary to understand her influence on textiles, especially their motifs and designs. A description of this romantic character is given by Cheney, who wrote:

> La Pompadour! She was educated to become the King's favorite long before the night she encountered him, and daily on horseback sought to waylay him as he hunted. Her game was the monarch, and at a ball she met him and he was charmed with the beautiful, graceful, witty, cultured, and keen-headed woman. And her education justified itself.
>
> It was unparalleled; yet in spite of the protests of ministers and court, and even of the lower strata, she held her King and dominated him by her unending, inexhaustible diversions. She ingratiated herself with the Queen, who made her a lady-in-waiting; and soon she was making and unmaking ministers, granting favors,

> and pensions till it began to be said of Louis that he had but three ministers, Cardinal Fleury, the Duc de Choiseul, and Madame Pompadour.
>
> Certainly Madame de Pompadour led the King into ruinous prodigality; yet her influence for good upon the arts cannot be over-estimated. Her rare intelligence was quick to see that the profligacies into which she led the sovereign alienated alike the court and the public. She accordingly attached to her interest the artists and the philosophers, and she became a great and real protectress and patroness of these. The moulding touch of her taste determined the style of decoration of the time in which she lived.
>
> She was perfectly equipped for her task. Her acting-- she had her own private theatre-- singing, dancing, harpsichord playing, and riding were perfection, her literary and artistic taste unerring. Voltaire, her poet-in-chief, said, "She is one of us." She protected Montesquieu, encouraged Diderot, discovered Bouchor, and patronized Van Loo and Greuze. She might be called an impassioned amateur, and with her came art symbols of her own and the King's love. (Cheney (1926), p. 107).

Romance entered the loom as ingenous themes of love and courtship appeared, expressed in such symbols as rosy, playful cupids, bows and arrows, quivers, pairs of doves, and entwined rings. Textiles bloomed with a profusion of light flowers, garlands, sprays, and bouquets tied with undulating ribbons or gracefully arranged in baskets. The motifs of flowers and love are attributed to the influence of Madame Pompadour:

> So came the "love knot" to its place in decoration. So came ribbons and nosegays and myrtle bowers and cupids and doves to play such a part in the art of the time. So did the incorporation of the flower motif receive yet another stimulation; for La Pompadour, who wished the beauty of flowers to be with her always, had created for her in full winter-- when her fields of daffodils, her shrubberies of roses, her pinks, violets, hyacinths, and tuberroses were no more in bloom-- an extraordinary series of designs containing all the sweet-smelling flowers of spring and summer. (Cheney (1926), p. 107).

Love of nature was one of the dominating emotions of the eighteenth century. This may have been influenced by Rousseau and others who advocated a return to nature and pastoral life. This naturally turned designs to agricultural subjects. One example of the "genre pittoresque"

style depicts flirtatious shepherds and shepherdesses tending their ewes and lambs. They are framed with Rococo scroll-work. Other pastoral themes which were especially fashionable were those appropriate to gardening and dairying, hunting and fishing.

Some forms of entertainment popular with courtiers were operas, theatre, concerts, masques, balls, and dances. With music and literature being in high favor, it is quite natural to find the interest in them expressed in such motifs as musical instruments and subjects from mythology. Favored musical designs were the Pipes of Pan, trumpets, banjos, lutes, and tambourines. The fabric designed by Philippe de la Salle, and pictured in Plate 1,Fig. 2, features musical instruments with a floral composition. La Fontaine's Fables, favorite subjects from mythology, are depicted in the tapestry upholstery of the furniture suite shown in Plate VIII.

Early in the eighteenth century, an embassy was dispatched to China with goods of rare value and charged with the commission of encouraging the opening of more extensive trade relations. The emperor was cordial in his reception of the King's messengers and returned magnificent, lavishly decorated gifts. According to Clifford (1927), page 157, this incident rendered influences from China as fashionable and for sometime thereafter Chinese motifs appeared in French textile designs. The noted painter, Pillement, ranked foremost in designing the Chinese fantasies which were favored by the court. Pillement had many followers, none of whom had visited the Far East; therefore, the portrayal of Chinese life as depicted by their imagination was slightly "Frenchified", whimsical and delightful.

Plate I

Fig. 1. Plain compound cloth, brocaded with silk and metal threads. White and silver. French, circa 1750. Brocaded nosegays are interspersed among horizontally-arranged curvilinear lines. Each row points in opposite directions creating a vertical "zig-zag" formation, which the French called renverse.

Fig. 2. Silk, plain satin brocaded. Designed by Philippe de la Salle. French, circa 1770. The bouquets and garlands of roses and musical instruments lend this textile a romantic air.

Plate I

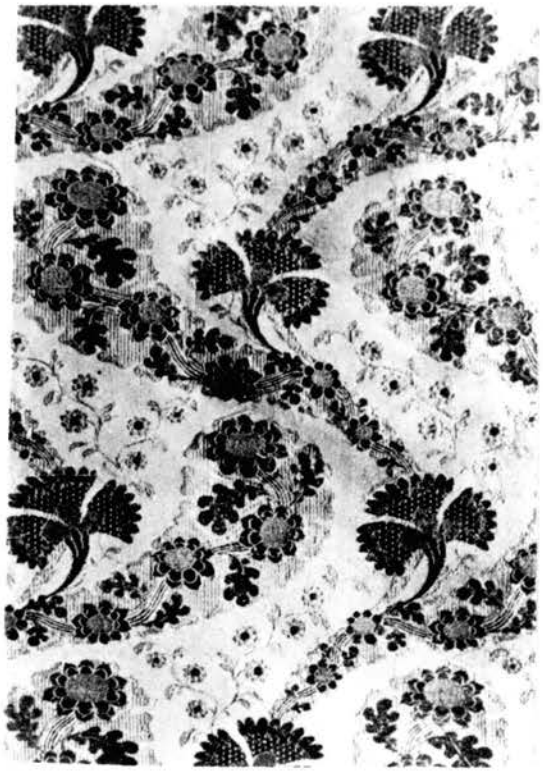


Fig. 1

Fig. 2

"Chinoiserie art" featured an endless range of Orient-inspired designs, such as quaint Chinese landscapes, boats, gardens, bridges, and pigtailed Chinamen perched in trees or swinging from pagodas. This Chinese influence is shown in the polychrome chinoiserie on Plate II, Fig. 1.

Madame Pompadour's admiration for the exotic also fostered interest in textiles which originated in India. Popular motifs were exotic birds, flowers, and plants-- especially the tree of life, as seen in Plate III, Fig. 2. These bold motifs were mixed with fanciful Rococo motifs, always in light, graceful compositions. Oglesby (1951), in describing the indiennes which Madame Pompadour popularized, wrote on page 171:

> One of the stockholders in the Compagnie des Indes was the Marquise de Pompadour, infallible in her recognition of beauty and indefatigable in her acquirement of it. Among the many beautiful wares brought in were lengths of cotton of exquisite texture on which had been painted by hand, in various and brilliant colors, the exotic fruits, flowers, and birds of India. These painted cloth panels, ablaze with roses, peonies, carnations, chrysanthemums, anemones, and pomegranates created a sensation.

Typical Colors

Pastels in bright, but gentle hues, dominated the colors of Louis XV textiles. According to Burris-Meyer (1930), on page 11, the palette was "light, facile, feminine, floral, mirthful, piquante, and pastoral colors". The color choice of Madame Pompadour, a soft crimson, was a favorite color of this era. Floral tones such as lilac, lavendar, rose, peach, and pink were very popular. Light blues, greens, violets, yellows, and golds were common. Favored background colors were white, off-white, neutrals as grey and pearl, or very pale tones of the above

Plate II

Fig. 1. Linen chinoiserie, block-printed. French, from the earliest years of the Jouy manufactory. An almost exact copy of a Chinese original.

Fig. 2. Silk, brocaded fancy cloth. Blue and white. French, circa 1730.

Plate II

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Plate III

Fig. 1. Toile de Jouy, linen. "Les Travaux de la Manufacture". French, designed by J. B. Huet. Red on white copper-plate print. Design has seven different scenes which show the technical processes of making toile de Jouy prints.

Fig. 2. Cotton, pounced and block-printed. French, circa 1760-1780. A popular design in which vine trunks curved upward giving forth shoots of flowers, fruits, and berries, with a gay and utter disregard of nature by having them all grow from the same parent stem.

Plate III

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

mentioned colors. Single colors or color combinations were often accented with gold or silver metallic threads.

Floral designs were portrayed in the most naturalistic manner ever attained. The colors of flowers were so realistic that the textiles gave semblance of paintings. Bright and subdued hues were dovetailed, thereby achieving gradations of highlights and shadows. This process of color gradation weaving, according to Scalamandre Museum of Textiles (1958), and called "pointes rentrees", was invented by Jean Revel in the first half of the eighteenth century.

Brilliant colors entered Louis XV decorative schemes with textiles from the Compagnie des Indes and the Orient-inspired chinoiseries. Vivid yellows, reds, and greens predominated, thus brightening the light, delicate color range of Rococo textiles.

Production of Textiles

Textiles for the royal court of Louis XV were produced by the state-controlled system that had been established in the seventeenth century by Colbert, finance minister of Louis XIV. The Royal Gobelins Manufactory and the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture monopolized art education and production. The Royal Gobelins Manufactory had been organized from a tapestry factory acquired by Colbert from the Gobelin family. Such artisans as designers, ornamental draftsmen, weavers, painters, and architects were brought together in this Royal Manufactory in the common task of serving the court. The two firms existed through the lavish patronage of the court and produced nearly all the art and decorations for the royal palaces and gardens. Associated with these

establishments were such able artists as Boucher, Watteau, Lancret, Fragonard, Oudry, Van Loo, Chardin, and Huet. With resources of this caliber at hand, almost anything could be created at command. It was probably the founding and the continued operation of the Academy and Gobelins Manufactory that established world-wide supremacy of French decorative art at that time.

The one name which must be mentioned in relation to textiles production during the eighteenth century is that of Christopher Phillip Oberkampf, originator of the printed cottons and linens known as toile de Jouys. Oberkampf, a German, developed improved printing methods at Jouy, near Versailles. Here he introduced the prints, which according to Faniel (1957), page 158, "Quickly obtained world wide celebrity for their freshness and brillance of design."

When the ban on manufacture of cottons and linens in France was lifted in 1759, the popularity of painted and printed cottons and linens was already firmly established. The King received toile de Jouys with such praise that he allowed Oberkampf to add the title "Manufacture Royale" after the name of his firm.

At the beginning of the toile de Jouy industry, only one mode of printing was used-- that used by the Orientals. The fabric was laid on a table and the workmen pressed upon it by hand a wooden block engraved with the outline of the design. The piece then passed through the hands of the painters who filled in the designs with brushes of various colors.

The original toiles were printed in one color only, usually blue, red, or black on a cream or white background. The patterns, always pictorial, as shown by Plate IV, usually were amusing figures and landscapes, allegorical or pastoral subjects, or subjects commemorating some

Plate IV

Fig. 1. Toile de Jouy, cotton, "Pastorale". French, designed by J. B. Huet. Red on white copper-plate print.

Fig. 2. Toile de Jouy, linen, "Le petit Buveur". Red on white block print. The central figure of the design was derived from an engraving by Aveline after a painting by Watteau.

Plate IV

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

historical or social event of the day. La Fontaine's Fables, already popular designs in tapestry, provided fashionable subjects for toile de Jouy prints. Candee (1930) describes the nature of toile de Jouy prints on page 252:

> Their designs suggest a world of insouciance in which we can live in day-dreams, groups of personages dancing in gipsy scenes, or picnicking alfresco, couples alone on scrappy little islands where none may observe the subleties of their love game, pagodas lightly floating on a ragged bit of earth attached to heaven by scrolls and flower chains.

Oberkampf later introduced the "resist" method, described as follows:

> The pattern was printed and then the whole fabric was dipped in a dye; a deep red for instance. Then the fabric was submerged in a acid bath which withdrew the red color wherever it touched the lines of the chemically printed design, leaving the natural linen color. (Clifford (1927), pp. 175-176).

The idea of polychrome printing was next conceived, using copper-plates. Second plates, which were engraved deeper and finer, overlaid the lines of the first plate. The design in Plate III, Fig. 1, depicts the detailed technical process followed in making toile de Jouy copper-plate prints. "Seven different scenes show with great accuracy and clear definition the work being done." (Lewis (1937), p. 268).

Oberkampf's success continued into the Louis XVI period. By 1797, printing from engraved cylinders was introduced, "alloting the work ordinarily accomplished by forty-two block printers to be completed in one day." (Clifford (1927), p. 176).

During the Louis XV and Louis XVI periods, Oberkampf developed and expanded the market which led to his being considered the leader in manufacturing cottons and linens in Europe. Shortly after the beginning of the nineteenth century production of toile de Jouys was halted by the French Revolution. This conclusion to toile de Jouys is described

briefly by Lewis (1937), who wrote on page 274:

> Disaster came upon this little town of Jouy and its famous factory with the march of the Prussians in 1815. They stormed the town, almost wrecked the works, and stole many things. It was not long after that the factory was torn down and the town sank back again to its quiet rural atmosphere after its blaze of flowering color and fame for almost a hundred years.

CHAPTER IV

TEXTILE USES

A discussion regarding specific uses of decorative textiles will have little meaning unless the reader has a concept of the general nature of interiors typical of the Louis XV era. A brief description of interiors which provided the settings for court life is included, therefore, in order that the reader may clearly see the relationship between social life and its setting. Interiors were designed with the needs and desires of the courtiers in mind. Daily life and social customs naturally dictated the design of the surroundings, because the lack of money was no deterent to building and decorating.

Nature of Interiors

The luxuriousness of interiors is described in the following accounts of social life:

> Brilliant and gaiety-mad times were these, and all day long unbroken streams of carriages were to be seen between Versailles and Paris; and the halls of the palaces could not always hold the satin- and silk-garbed throngs that would push into them. In the evenings the great gallery was lighted by three thousand candles; and there were operas on Wednesdays, concerts on Saturdays, comedies on Tuesdays and Fridays, and gambling always, though the King had little taste for any of these things. He was a singular character-- nothing interested, amused, or held his interest for long. The King was interest proof, and it was left to Madame de Pompadour to speed this blase', wearied, restless, melancholy sovereign through a very fever of unceasing fete days for nearly twenty years of life-- and, incidentally peculiarly enough, to determine for many years the styles of textile decoration and of art in France. (Cheney (1926), p. 106).

> With the reign of Louis XV, even more sumptuous surroundings were desired. At Fontainebleau the luxury was unparalleled, and when the King had a reception, at which there were cards and dancing, the spectacle, according to records, was one of sumptuous elegance. Four or five hundred guests surrounded the tables where cards and cavagnole were played. Hanging from the ceiling painted with cupids garlanded with flowers were many blazing chandeliers, their brillancy reflected a thousand times in the tall mirrors. Everything was flooded with light-- the painted walls, the rich gilding, the diamonds sparkling on white necks and in the hair of the women, whose dresses gleamed with gold, silver, pearls, and artificial flowers and fruits all in the most gorgeous hues. The men were almost as gay. Their hair was powdered, curled, and dressed. Their coats of sky-blue, rose, peach, pearl- or puce-colored satin, velvet, or brocade, were embroidered with silks and gold, and ornamented with ruffles of cravats of lace. The dress of a man, with his jewelled sword, shoulder knots with diamond tags and buckles of brilliants on shoe and knee, might have cost a small fortune. Gold and silver thread made stiff and costly, stuffs already rich in themselves, while the money lavished on lace had no limit. (Moore (1903), pp. 168-169).

One can better visualize the splendid social occasions held in the palaces by picturing costumes of the courtiers as described by Chuse (1930), on page 50, and shown in Plate V:

> We can picture these gallant gentilhommes descending from their carriages in all their glory-- waistcoats with buckramed lamp-shaped skirts, great turn-up cuffs that might conceal all sorts of important documents, lace jabot, tight breeches, stockings clocked with gold or silver, square-toed shoes, cane, muff and snuff-box in hand, and to crown it all, a three-cornered hat that was perched at a dashing angle atop the powdered curled wig that was characteristic of the time.
>
> It is difficult for us to imagine how these over-dressed gentlemen so self-conscious, so absorbed in the details of their dress could have escorted their ladies, shown them about with the suavity of manner and the solicitousness that characterized them. Nevertheless, la grande dame stepped timidly forward, a mass of lace and ruffles on the protective arm of her gallant. Her high Louis heels clicked gaily from beneath her large hooped skirt opened down the front, and festooned, together with the underskirt, with flowers and lace ruffles. Her tight bodice was decollete. With daintly gloved hands she fanned a smiling face that had to hide its weariness resulting partly from the difficult task of breathing caused by the confining bodice, and partly by the task of balancing the high powdered wig and ostrich plumes upon her head.

Plate V

Costumes of Court, Reign of Louis XV (1715-1774).

Plate V

An image of Louis XV interiors is incomplete without an understanding of the nature of social life. Social pleasures are described as follows:

> At few periods has social life been more charming. The art of entertainment had reached a high degree of development, and both men and women were well fitted to render it attractive; they wished to be amused by others; they were themselves able to amuse. Hospitality was practiced on a large scale, and the great houses stood open for guests on all days and hours.
>
> In society the upper classes found alike their pleasure and their occupation, and social life was brought to a degree of perfection only to be acquired by those who added untiring effort to natural fitness. To the act of social intercourse the upper classes in France devoted the energy which the mathematician bestows on his problem or the painter on his art; if the results of such endeavors were not of vast importance they were pleasing. No business cares, no irksome reflections on the problems of existance distracted the thoughts of those who believed that the object of life was to secure its pleasures. A gentleman was expected to be courteous, to be well bred, to be witty, and always charming. Such were the ideals, and they were realized. Life was not a round of social duties, but of social pleasures. At their chateaux in the country and their hotels in Paris, the wealthy and well-bred extended a hospitality that never wearied, and neglected nothing that could add to the pleasure of guests. There were few dinners where the conversation was not agreeable; there were private theatres in abundance, and at many of them the acting would have done little discredit to the Francais. Nowhere could there be less question as whether life was worth living: the place and grounds were beautiful; every luxury was furnished that wealth could produce. (Perkins (1897), Vol. II, pp. 389-390).

It was during the eighteenth century that courtiers started living mainly in fixed residences rather than moving back and forth from palaces or chateaux to the central court of Versailles as they had in the previous period. The nobility now was inclined to spend its money on surroundings where the "art of good living" could be cultivated. With this trend towards fixed residence, furniture and appointments were designed for particular rooms rather than for a number of rooms which required furnishings to be interchangeable. (Faniel (1957), p. 135).

Louis XV discontinued his predecessor's constant round of great receptions and State functions, relying instead upon fewer large assemblies at balls and concerts and upon more small informal gatherings. As a result of this changed social custom, there was a change in the interior structure of palaces, lodges, and homes.

As entertainment became more informal and intimate, likewise did the rooms. This intimate effect was achieved primarily by the "petit appartement". The enormous galleries, reception rooms, ballrooms, and the succession of large rooms opening one from another, which characterized the palaces gradually diminished in number and size. Rooms became small and often had special purposes such as dining, card playing, dressing, music, and sitting, as shown in Plate VI.

Since most of the courtiers had no demanding occupations or service to render, their major concern was the enjoyment of everyday living and social events. The taste for refinement and luxury that penetrated the social life at court penetrated daily life. The courtiers wanted interiors which provided comfortable, pleasant, and attractive surroundings for living leisurely and for entertaining their families and friends. The rooms where the daily life of the courtiers was spent were adapted to an increasing demand for comfort and convenience. Light-weight, less formal furnishings and appointments gave these rooms a pleasing character of comfort, intimacy, and elegance.

THE 18TH CENTURY

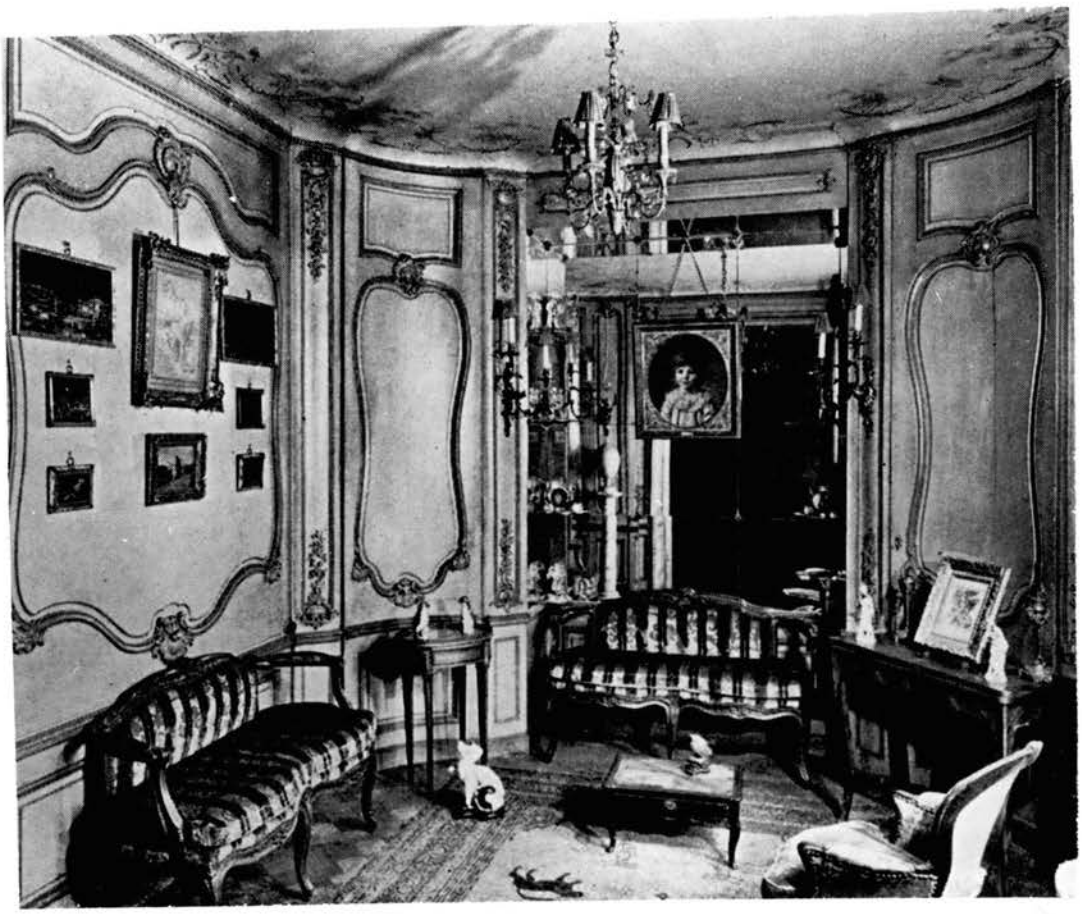
Upholstery

The age of Louis XV demanded practical, comfortable furniture to complement an interior decor' having comfort as its keynote. Emphasis

Plate VI

A small sitting room fitted like an exquisite jewel box. This room, reconstructed in Paris, contains the original white and gold wood panelling from Madame Pompadour's boudoir in the Chateau de Belleville. The two marquises are upholstered in a flowered, striped satin.

Plate VI



on comfort was reflected by changes in some existing pieces and by introduction of new furniture items. Imaginative and skilled craftsmen devised new pieces such as chaise longues and daybeds, and a variety of tables for specialized purposes. For example, there were card and game tables for those who enjoyed the gambling sport, or games of tric-trac and backgammon; small individual tea tables for those who followed the tea-drinking fashion brought from the Orient; individual toilette tables for dressing rooms; and individual chiffonieres, in which the ladies kept needlework and triffles for sewing socials. Couches were designed in sweeping curves and on a smaller scale.[5]

Chairs were designed to accommodate the ladies' fashions. Candee (1935) says on page 157: "The wide panniers with hoops were thrown into ungovernable pranks if a lady tried to compress them within the arms of a chair." So the arms were curved outward slightly and set about halfway back so that madame might be more at ease while playing cards and might better display the elegance of her costume. The back of the chair was contracted about halfway up and was generally low, so it would not interfere unnecessarily with a lady's ruffled collar and elaborate hair-do.

The work of the upholsterer achieved a high standard of perfection during this period when comfort and fine upholstery exemplified the Louis XV style. Furniture for reclining and sitting was padded and upholstered at every conceivable place. Manchettes, little upholstered

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[5]As contrasted to the Louis XIV period, when, generally speaking, furniture was large, heavy, and rectilinear; often ill-fitted to the size of the people for whom pieces were designed.

cushions on chair arms, were introduced for elbow rests, another evidence of the consuming concern for comfort. Seat cushions were portable so they might be moved about or arranged to suit any desire.

The upholstered chair perfected during this age was the bergere, pictured in Plate VII, soft and low, restful as a bed-- designed to cater to comfort. There were three principal types of the bergere. One was the fauteuil, also shown in Plate VII, which featured a wide, deep seat, open arms, and the usual padded arms and loose cushions. Another type, referred to as a bergere en gondole, had an arched horseshoe-shaped back which continued to form the arms. The back and sides were rounded about the seat and were upholstered as one unit. The general shape of this form, as its name implies, was like a gondola. The third type, called bergere confessionale, was designed with shallow wings and a very high back. A special-purpose chair of the confessional type had a narrow ledge along the top rail of the chair back, placed for an onlooker to rest his elbows while supervising a card game.

Two other upholstered chairs representative of the Louis XV style were the marquise, shown in Plate VI, page 32, which corresponds to the English courting chair or love seat; and the chaise encoigmure, or corner chair.

The relaxing of social customs and the increasing amount of informal, intimate entertainment for small groups, popularized various forms of sofas and settees. "Today," wrote Voltaire, "social behavior is easier than in the past. Ladies can be seen reclining on sofas or day-beds without causing embarressment to their friends and acquaintances." (Faniel (1957), p. 36).

Plate VII

Informal drawing room. The bergere, closed-arm chair, at left is upholstered in yellow velvet; the two back fauteuils, open-arm chairs, are upholstered in red Genoese velvet; and the fauteuil at right in blue and white damask. The ceiling to floor draperies are of flower-patterned red satin.

Plate VII

Two particular customs which encouraged use of settees and sofas for seating guests were the constant round of tea parties and the social salons. Salon gatherings were a form of social life popularized by the Louis XV court. They appear to have been more than a gay, frivolous, entertainment. Since the court was no longer held at one center, Versailles, but now was dispersed in castles, chateaux, and many small houses and hotels in and outside Paris, the salon was the major expression of Parisian society. The salons of courtiers, philosophers, scientists, writers, artists, and the like, were the despotic leader of styles; sending fashions in decorating, dress, thought, manners, speech and cultural conversation throughout Europe. (Guerard (1959), p. 203). Art and literature were fostered by the court via these salons where the intellectual and the social elite mixed, not wholly dependent upon a central court as they had been in the previous century.

Salons necessitated groupings of furniture in conversational units. Settees and sofas developed into a variety of species during this period. Some of them were called: confident, conversational, intimate, basket shape, gondola shape, and winged type-- all perfected to suit desires for comfort and pleasure. There was a different type sofa for almost any attitude in which the user might wish to repose and they became fitted to human size. When sofas were moved to the privacy of women's boudoirs, they were given a wide variety of feminine names such as the "paphos", the "duchesse", the "veilleuse", and the "turquoise", shown in Plate VIII, Fig. 2.

The "duchesse", Plate VIII, Fig. 1, was a type day bed which was formed of two parts: a bergere armchair with an unusually long seat and

Plate VIII

Fig. 1. Carved walnut duchesse brisée, with the chair in the form of a bergere en gondole. French, mid eighteenth century.

Fig. 2. Carved beechwood turquoise, a French daybed introduced around 1750, designed with a long seat cushion and out-scrolled sides of equal height. Upholstered in green velvet with gold gimp and tassels.

Plate VIII

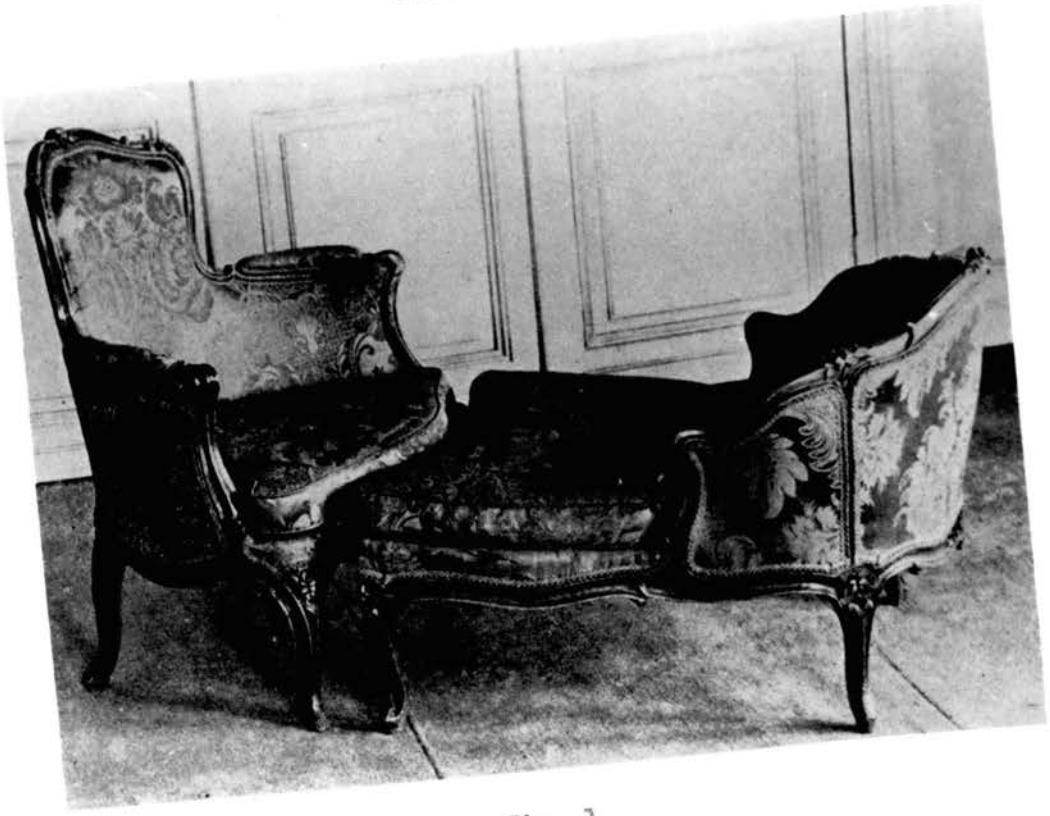

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

a small chair with a low back which could be set at the foot of the longer section to convert it into a sofa. The "duchesse brisée" had a third section, a stool or pouf which was a central section extending the length of the seat of the bergere to provide the occupant with a place to rest the legs and feet.

The term "confidente" was given to an unusually large upholstered sofa which had rounded ends separated from the main part by arms, so that a small triangle was formed at each end. The upholstered chaise longue, a chair with an elongated seat supported by additional legs, was a very fashionable piece of furniture. It was fitted with a long, loose seat cushion and extra back cushions. (Faniel (1957), p. 37 and Boger (1959), p. 133).

A canape' was usually designed en suite with the chairs and it took a variety of forms. Sometimes it had a gracefully arched horse-shoe-shaped back which curved around the front forming semi-circular ends, called canape' a' corbeille, because of its resemblance to a round basket. The back and arms were upholstered as one unit. It resembled a long fauteuil, because the back was sometimes divided into three or four chair backs and it had open arms. END

Upholstery fabrics were often designed for definite types of furniture, the design suiting the shape of the various parts. The scale of patterns was usually small, consistent with the modest proportions of the rooms of that time. Upholstery was fastened to the frames by a single row of brass-headed tacks placed close together.

The eighteenth century was the great century for tapestry furniture coverings, as shown in Plate IX. Fine tapestries for upholstery were

Plate IX

Large salon with painted wall panels by J. B. Huet, who used a combination of birds and chinoiseries as his decorative motifs. The chairs are upholstered with Beauvais tapestries, patterned with subjects from La Fontaine's Fables. The fire screen is shaped exactly like the backs of the chairs, and is covered with tapestry from the same series.

Plate IX

woven at Gobelins Manufactory, at Beauvais, and at various manufactories located in the city of Aubusson. The designs reflected the fantasies of court life. Instead of bold vigorous renderings depicting "the chase", war, or the oversized fruits and flowers of the previous reign; the tapestry designs were shepherds, shepherdesses, nymphs, satyrs, exotic people, and animals frolicking in beautiful landscapes. Such designs illustrated La Fontaine's Fables and Boucher and Watteau's garden fantasy paintings. According to Faniel (1957), on page 157: "Figure subjects were generally used on the backs of the chairs while animals and landscapes were considered more suitable for the seat."

Various kinds of needlework were popular for upholstery because French women, from the Queen to the humblest peasant's wife, found occupation in this manner. Petit-point, gros-point, and needlepoint coverings were beautiful and durable. Not only cushions and chair coverings were created by this laborious stitchery, but window valances, wall panels, entire bed spreads and hangings, and charming pictures were also produced by the same handcraft techniques. Quilting was another form of needle art sometimes applied to decorative fabrics. This beautified the surface and added durability and warmth, qualities particularly desirable in bed coverings. (Oglesby (1951), p. 170).

Many other textiles were fashionably used for upholstery. Plain and figured cut-silk velvets, brocades and brocatelles, damasks, satins, and moquette were in vogue. The heavier Indian and Oriental prints, chintzes, and toile de Jouys were in high favor, especially in bedrooms.

A common piece in Louis XV interiors that also featured upholstery was the screen. Screens served varied purposes, such as protection from drafts, as room dividers, and as decorative features. The carved

wooden frames were gilded, painted, or entirely covered in fabric. The panels were made of various materials-- fabrics, needlework, or tapestry which matched or blended with the furniture suite of the room as shown in Plate IX, page 42.

Since fireplaces served as the major source of heat, fire screens were important decorative accessories. The most common fire screen was the écran, which had a fixed panel enclosed in an elaborately carved upright frame. Two other popular fire screens were the fan-shaped écran à éventail, and the écran à coulisse, which featured a vertical upright frame enclosing a sliding panel that could be adjusted up and down to regulate the heat from the fireplace. Another type of fire screen featured a narrow shelf on the front side for the purpose of holding sewing, cards, books, or other objects used by the ladies while sitting by the fire.

Large screens with three or four folding panels were usually upholstered with colorful fabrics or a series of tapestries, designed especially for the size or shape of the screen. Foley (1910) has this description regarding tapestries adapted to screens on page 230: "Screens were decorated with love scenes and representatives of ladies and gentlemen who look as if they passed their entire existence in the elaboration of toilettes or the exchange of compliments."

Drapery

Drapery was another means of generating feelings of comfort, intimacy, and elegance to the interior decor'. Graceful hangings and drapings of fabrics in pretty colors softened the rigid lines of architectural detail on windows, concealed the structure and frame-

work of beds, enhanced the delicate wall colors, and added interest to many a dull alcove, archway, and doorway.

The influence of court life was expressed again in the design of draperies. Draperies held striking resemblance to the skirts of ladies' costumes. In comparing drapery to dress, Candee (1930) wrote on pages 136-137:

> Just as the dresses were rich and voluminous, so were the draperies of the house. We never weary of making the comparison, for it reveals a harmony of thought. Both dress and drapery of the home are composed for women. Then is it not reasonable that a similarity should exist between the two at a given era?
>
> Curtains for the window and for the bed grew laughably like the costumes of ladies at the court of Versailles. The silks of which they were made were the same, both in coloring and design. As the skirt was voluminous so were the draperies. Lavish expenditure was the order of the day, the King and La Pompadour setting the example, so the appalling expense of the toilettes affrighted no one.
>
> As skirts were many yards around, it was desirable to ornament their vast spaces, so there came drapings edged with fringe, ribbons sewn on in waves, lace the same [The costume in Plate X shows the popular wavy ruffles.] A window might no longer be hung with a simple breadth, it must show as many complications as the ladies' frocks. And so came lambrequins [6], and curtains fell but a little way before they might fall again. The lambrequin was made of ample lengths, several of them, and these were draped one over the other with the avoidance of repeated curves which makes the charm of the Rococo.

Since Rococo fashions called for curves, draperies also were curved by clever looping, draping, and swagging. This applied to both window and bed draperies, or wherever a drapery might be hung. Straight-topped windows usually had a valance, curved along the lower edge thus concealing the gathers or pleats of the hangings and the drawing

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[6] lambrequin- A border of fabric across the top of a window, usually draped by swagging or looping.

Plate X

Costumes of Court, Reign of Louis XV (1715-1774).

Plate X


P. Pauquet
Costumes de Cour
Règne de Louis XV
d'après
C. N. Cochin fils.

mechanisms; or a lambrequin, which was shaped and terminated at the angles in points with tassels. Round-topped windows were commonly finished in one of two ways, either with a short-looped lambrequin or with a long curtain that had varying arrangements of rings and cords which drew up the drapery in the daytime and let it fall at night.

Window and bed draperies were very often finished with matching or contrasting braid, fringes, tassels, and other decorations. Oglesby (1951) describes these trims on page 173:

> The ingenuity of the French craftsmen, their taste and skill, is charmingly proven by the trimmings they created with threads. Fringes, tassels, gimps, and galloons evidence their fine color sense and the fertility of their ideas.
>
> A solidly woven band was called a "galloon"; a rounded band was known as a "cord", a plaited or braided band which was sometimes ornamented with loops and tassels was given the name of "gimp". These trimmings had a functional purpose-- to cover seams and joinings, but they also served to emphasize shape and line, and they added decorative note to the object to which they were applied. Another form of textile trimming employed by the French was the tassel. Its original purpose was probably to give weight to the cord from which it hung; but they were also spaced on braids.

The commonly used drapery fabrics during the early part of the eighteenth century were damasks, brocades, silks, satins, taffetas, and light-weight silk velvets. When the ban on the manufacture of cottons and linens was finally lifted and they again became readily available, toile de Jouys, indiennes, and chinoiseries returned to popularity. The cottons and linens were fresh-appearing, new and different from the silks and satins that had been used for years. Lewis (1937) says on page 263: "Down came the silks and velvets from the windows and beds. These new cottons were bright and gay. Every woman must have them..."

Drapery was the dominating feature of the Louis XV beds. Beds were

romantic in decor', comfortable and inviting. The informality and intimacy that was desired in interiors was especially important for the bedroom, because it was customary to receive one's visitors in the bedroom during the eighteenth century. This was the age of the elegant boudoir. A becoming setting for a woman reclining in bed was of first importance. Candee (1930), on page 138, relates that we can almost see the touch of La Pompadour in the styles of the beds. "She preferred to lie in plain view, a fresh-plucked rose on a silken cushion."

Beds set longthwise along the wall, somewhat like today's sofas, were the first step towards a more informal conception of the bedroom.[7] Sometimes an alcove was designed especially to contain the bed, which served as seating space during the daytime.

Some beds could be converted into sofas. They were named à la turque, à la romaine, and à lá anglaise. (Maillard (1925), p. 60). They had a shaped upholstered back piece and two side or end pieces and were usually placed longthwise against the wall, as shown in Plate XI. Some of these beds had a small and narrow arched canopy. The canopy, the upholstery on the end and back pieces, the bed cover, and the cushions invariably were of matching fabric.

Other beds which were regarded as fashionable during this period were the lit à duchesse, the lit d ànge, and the lit à lá polonaise, or Polish bed. There were variations of these beds, but the following

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[7]During the seventeenth century, beds were huge, majestic structures, with elaborate fittings and hangings which could be drawn around all four sides. The bed was often placed in the center of the room upon a platform so high that steps were necessary to reach the bedside. Bedrooms were large and formal, and were the customary place for holding State functions, receptions, and other large court gatherings.

Plate XI

Beds set lengthwise along the wall, somewhat like today's sofa, were a first step towards a more informal conception of bedrooms. The head and foot panels of this bed are linked by a third panel along the back side, all upholstered with painted fabric like that on the canopy. The light design of the canopy is in keeping with the feminine character of the pink and white bedroom.

Plate XI

general descriptions apply. The lit a' la duchesse had an oblong tester which extended the length of the bed, had no posts, and had a single low headboard. The oblong tester of the lit d ánge was shorter than the bed, had no posts, and had a low headboard and footboard, the latter as a rule being lower. The Polish bed, shown in Plate XII, featured a headboard and footboard of equal height. Four iron uprights supporting a dome curved inward and outward from the wooden framework. From the dome fell four draperies, each gracefully fastened to one of the iron rods. Domes were elegantly dressed with poufs and swags of fabric matching the bed draperies and sometimes were surrmounted with such fancies as ostrich plumes, as in Plate XIII, or gilded cupids and tulips. (Maillard (1925), p. 60). The domes and canopies are described by Candee (1930), on page 139, as follows:

> It was when the posts were gone that the most charming effects were gained. The canopy became then but a small semi-circle of gold from which depended silken stuffs distending themselves in clouds such as those that cupids loved, the rosy playful cupids of the eighteenth century which seemed to retain something of the infantile in spite of the sophisticated life they shared.
>
> Such a drapery made a nest of tinted shadows around the pillows and over the face of her who reposed thereon. Add to it a coverlet of the same silks and the resting place of woman has reached its perfection of beauty.

The early bedcover for the post beds was a large flat square or rectangle, split for the accommodation of bed posts at the foot and drawn up over the pillows at the head. Later a flounce was added, in accord with the bouffant toilettes of the ladies. The flounce was set on with a galloon and had double box-pleats or full gathers to contain the amplitude and to dispose prettily of the mass of fabric. (Candee (1930), p. 139).

Plate XII

Canopied bed in style "a' la polonaise". The bed is hung with cherry red silk, a color which stands out against the soft blue wall panelling. Large panels of Indian prints have been inserted into the panelling. The design of these prints branches of foliage and flowers.

Plate XII

Plate XIII

Canopied beds were in fashion throughout the eighteenth century-- when it was fashionable to receive one's visitors in the bedroom. Canopies were of varying degrees of elaboration and were always hung with the same fabric used on the bed. A toile de Jouy of pink design on white background decorates this country chateau bedroom. The plain white wall panelling contrasts strongly with the rich pattern of the parquetry floor and emphasizes the importance of the bed, the principal piece of furniture in the room.

Plate XIII

Bed covers for the three-sided beds placed along walls or in alcoves were usually simple, straight covers scalloped or curved along the lower edge. This type bed had a pillow at both ends, illustrated by Plate XI on page 51, in order to appear more like a sofa in the daytime. The pillows were covered either by the drawn-up bed cover or fitted with pillow cases that matched the bed cover and draperies.

Palampores, bed covers imported from India, were very popular. According to Candee (1930) on page 243, the most favored design for a palampore was the tree of life, "a straying meander of slender branches all aflower with blooms of many kinds, the trunk small and planted in a pyramid of rocks." An example of this design is contained in Plate III, Fig. 2, on page 18.

The bed upholstery, in addition to the bed drapery, contributed much to the illusion of comfort and elegance. On page 198, Faniel (1957) states: "More than any other eighteenth century room, the furniture of the bedroom depended on the skill and resource of the upholsterer." The head and footboards were upholstered and nearly always matched the bed hangings, covers, and other embellishments such as flounces, canopies, and cushions. Bed frames, when visible, were carved, gilded, or painted. The more elegant pieces had elaborate ornaments on the posts and canopies.

No amount of detail in the fittings of a bed was out-of-order. The glittering public magnificence of Louis XIV was, in the Louis XV reign, softened to the intimacy of the boudoir. Beds must have been such beautiful conceptions in the Louis XV period that it is no wonder that the bedroom remained long in fashion as the place for receiving favored guests.

Wall Treatments

Wall treatments designed for the small, special-purpose rooms of the Louis XV period are best described with the French adjectives "agréable' and charmant'". The purpose of the room was often the key to the wall decoration. For example, music room walls might have been decorated with appropriate themes from mythology or trophies of instruments. This decoration was presented in a number of ways: carved in relief on the panelling, printed or painted on fabric, or in tapestry designs. The decorative subjects were elaborated in charming compositions with every possible detail carried out to give the room a comfortable, pleasant, and elegant atmosphere.

The advent of small rooms encouraged wall treatments that had an entirely different character from that of earlier days. During the seventeenth century, rooms were hung with tapestries of great size for several reasons-- to help conceal coarsely finished wall surfaces, to help keep the large rooms warm by covering the cold, damp walls, and to add color and cheer to the solemn interiors. This type wall treatment passed out of fashion, and the major replacement for the tapestry covered bare walls was boiserie, wooden panelling. The following quotation compares wall treatments of the Louis XIV and the Louis XV periods:

> The marble and stuccoed walls with their cold and formal grandeur found in the state appartments of the palaces and mansions in Louis XIV's reign were largely supplanted by panelled walls in the eighteenth century. These wood-panelled walls were very often painted white and the carved Rococo decorations and moldings were gilded. Especially fashionable were gilded reliefs with their subjects inspired from mythological themes of a romantic nature. These same subjects were also found in the over-door paintings. Occasionally colorful silks such as damask or brocade, or painted

> papers were arranged in panels. Tapestries were not used as extensively for wall hangings as in the previous century. (Boger (1959), p. 126).

According to Faniel (1957), on page 13, wall panelling, brought to the highest degree of refinement in the eighteenth century, was one of the main factors making for the comfort and beauty of the interiors of the period which, "As the century advanced, became even more luxurious and intimate in character." In describing wall panelling, Faniel (1957) states on page 135:

> The substitution of wall panelling for large tapestries completely changed the atmosphere of the interior of houses. The panelling was seldom left in the natural color of the wood, for that was considered too somber; usually it was painted white, pale yellow, lilac, or pale green. The carved decorations of the panels were usually painted a paler tone of the color used on the rest of the wall, or sometimes they were gilded.

Panelling was sometimes designed with spaces to be filled with textiles. Pictorial designs such as those found in the Indian prints with the tree of life design in Plate XII, page 54, and toile de Jouys were especially popular.

Walls covered with textiles were definitely "haute mode", particularly those of bedrooms. In the early part of the period, damasks silks, and brocades were most frequently used. Later, Indian cottons, toiles de Jouys, and chintzes were favored. The bedroom pictured in Plate XIV shows all the walls covered in fabric matching the bed fittings. In Plate XV, just an alcove is covered, the fabric serving as a decorative feature rather than background.

Textile hangings were used to adorn the wall panelling. Rodier (1931), in describing the cotton and linen hangings, gives a clue to their popularity. He says on page 299:

Plate XIV

The curtains and upholstery of this small bedroom create a soft, intimate atmosphere. The four-post bed is hung with drapery and pelmets of the same fabric used on the walls. The design of roses is enclosed in a trellis-work pattern.

Plate XIV

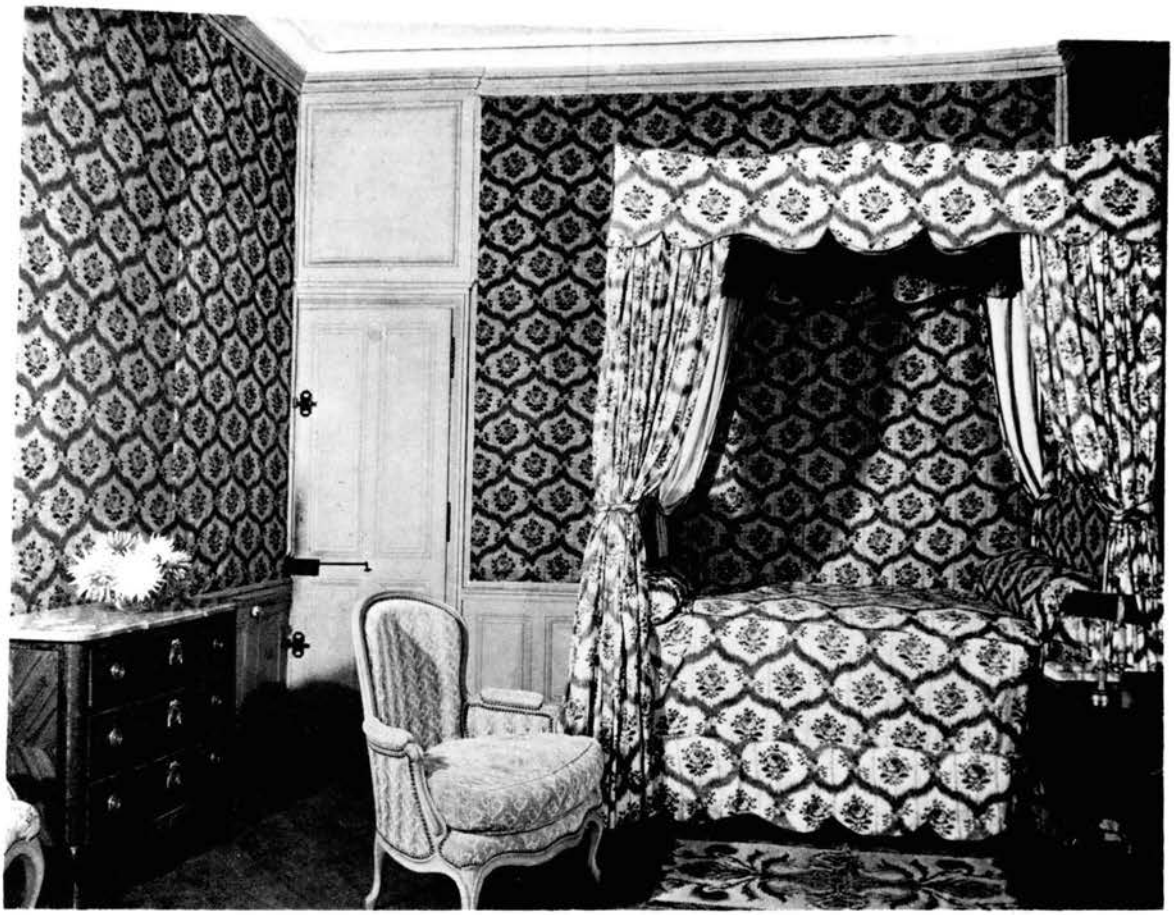
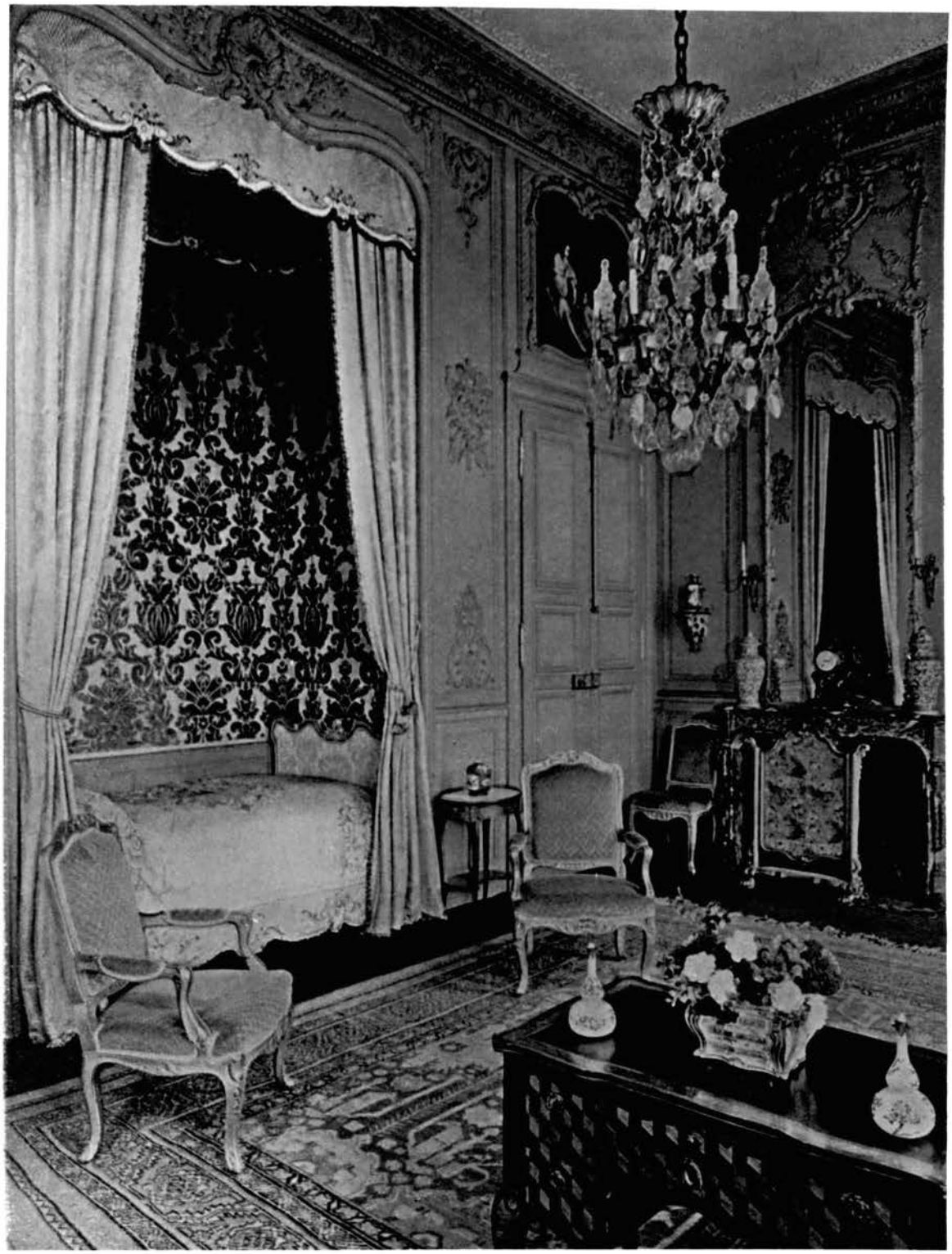


Plate XV

An alcove gives this bedroom its highly individual character. It is hung with cream damask patterned in green, dating from the Regence period. A day bed with two ends is set into the alcove. The color of the damask contrasts with the blue wall panelling and the yellow draperies. Although this bedroom is quite large, the effect of the contrasted colors conveys an atmosphere of intimacy.

Plate XV



> The cotton and linen hangings gave light and life to what had been too rich in ornamentation and in texture; they were in harmony with the desire to breathe more freely, to make a new beginning without traditions and trammelling customs... They proved that solidity and lasting qualities were not the only desirable characteristics in cloth or costume.

A feeling of richness and luxury was added to walls by tapestries, partially because of their high cost, but also because of their rich and beautiful coloring. Usually tapestries were displayed proudly by their being framed with moulding, as in Plate XVI, or were hung directly on the panelling. Generally, those used as wall hangings were smaller than those of the Louis XIV period because they were for decorative rather than utilitarian purposes. Tapestries were among the most prized possessions of the French people at that time; they were often presented to the King's royal visitors and served as rewards to favorite mistresses and courtiers.

The subject matter of tapestries was similar to other Louis XV textiles-- pleasant, graceful, and gay patterns. Candee (1930), on pages 124-125, relates court life to the nature of tapestry designs popularly used for wall hangings in the following manner:

> The contrast of voluminous silken brocades in rich coloring displayed in the informality of the out-of-doors, was irrestibly piquante. Added to this was the charm of playful youth and the witchery of the greenwood, the surrounding forest. The very trees prompted gay mischief, and so we have the decorative scenes of men and ladies playing at love and playing at sports. Artificiality had its part in all these games, as when it became the fashion to play at being haymakers, gardeners, and the like; but is supposable that when a crowd of very young and utterly idle people are turned out from the formal palace into a limitless forest and garden, their play becomes both genuine and reckless.
>
> The gardens of Versailles not only furnished these scenes of fete gallantes and fetes champetres but marvelous water parties under the full moon, with music adding to the witchery, and boats filled with lively persons of the court, pelting other boats with roses and assailing ears with daring provocations from safe distance.

Plate XVI

The wall panelling of this drawing room features "gypseries", carved and molded plasterwork in relief on pale blue panelling and rococo mouldings designed to frame Flemish tapestries. The winged confessional chairs and sofa are upholstered in crimson fabric, and the wooden frames are painted white. The fire screen is covered in hand-done needlework.

Plate XVI

Tapestry designers seized the beautiful gardens and terraces graced by fountains, sculptures, and lakes as backgrounds for playful scenes such as a game of Blindman's Buff, as illustrated in Plate XVII, Fig. 1. Set within these flowering chambers were ladies elegantly dressed in silken drapery and gallants in apparel no less gorgeous. Plate XVIII, Fig. 1 depicts the gaiety and fantasy that tapestry weavers incorporated into the exotic art of the Orient.

Other popular tapestries of the day woven at various factories were from the series of "The History of Don Quixote", "Fables of La Fontaine", "The Loves of the Gods", and "Chinese Tapestries". Most eighteenth century tapestries were finished with woven borders resembling carved and gilded wooden frames.

Late in the Louis XV period, textiles were used indirectly in the manufacture of a new wall treatment, flocked papers. These early wall papers served as imitations of damasks, velvets, and brocades; and thus, were very popular. Flocked papers are described by Oglesby (1951) on page 196 as follows:

> The designs of these papers were large and stemmed from damasks. Over their surface (to which glue had been applied) bits of wool were blown. It adhered to the paper and the result was an interesting texture effect. About 1750 the use of bits of wool was superseded by silk and still later by brilliant grains of gold and silver.

The influence of textiles used in wall treatments can be followed in the increasing popularity of wallpapers. Late in the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, the designs of toile de Jouys, chinoiseries, scenic landscapes, and other favorite textile designs were reproduced on papers, offering luxurious-appearing wall treatments to those who could not afford costly textile coverings for walls.

Plate XVII

Fig. 1. "A Game of Blindman's Buff", an Aubusson tapestry by J. B. Huet. "The court, while it might suffer at times from sickness and death, never allowed itself to think of such things. It amused itself with balls and masques, plays, operas, and even with blindman's buff. The gardens at Versailles were always in gala dress and at night musicians played among the trees and thousands of lights sparkled among the flowers." Moore (1903), p. 161.

Fig. 2. "Flora and Zephr", Gobelins Manufacture. This tapestry is an example of the eighteenth century tapestries which closely imitated paintings. Designers seized the beautiful gardens and terraces of Versailles for playful scenes such as this.

Plate XVII

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Plate XVIII

Fig. 1. This exotic tapestry with imaginary Chinese subjects was designed by Boucher for the Aubusson factory. The pattern was so popular, it was repeated throughout the Louis XVI period.

Fig. 2. A Beauvais tapestry of the "verdure" type, which had subjects of landscapes and scenes. This early eighteenth century tapestry is similar to those woven in the Grande Manner in the Louis XIV period.

Plate XVIII

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

The influence of court life on textile styles of the Louis XV period is apparent in various ways. Court life was gay, frivolous, romantic, and intimate-- less formal than the traditions of etiquette, religion, and grandeur of the previous Louis XIV reign. The Louis XV style developed at a time when the general organization of social life was growing freer. Social entertainment consisted of constant rounds of garden parties, gambling, champagne fetes, dances, teas, operas, masques, and concerts. Informal, comfortable daily life demanded interiors which were pleasant, but also elegant for when the courtiers entertained friends and families.

Certain individuals, such as the King's favorite mistresses, exercised an important influence on textiles. Of these, Madame Pompadour was supreme; and through the mediums of art, decoration, literature, and theatre, she dictated the tastes and modes of living during the major part of the period. To her is accredited the style of decoration typical of the time in which she lived. Specific influences attributed to her are apparent in designs. There are motifs of romance, such as the love knot, cupids, doves, bows and arrows; and the incorporation of naturalistic flowers. Her admiration for exotic art rendered Chinese and India-influenced textiles popular among the courtiers.

Women played predominant roles in court life. This influence is

shown by the feminine character of textiles, furniture design, and other aspects of interior decor' characteristic of the Louis XV period. Designs were romantic, imaginative, and delicate; colors and interior treatments were dainty and gay in spirit.

Designers and craftsmen invented the designs of fancy, grace, and delicacy to please the followers of Louis XV and Madame Pompadour. Artists from varied phases of the field-- architects, weavers, designers, painters, and sculptors-- worked together in state-controlled workshops in the common task of glorifying the King and serving his court.

Another major influence which affected textiles was the very nature of the court. The comfort, elegance, and beauty the courtiers wanted in their homes was achieved primarily by the use of textiles. This period featured soft, comfortable upholstery; rich, beautiful draperies in charming colors and designs; and interesting wall treatments which conveyed feelings of intimacy and luxury. Such characteristics of textiles were stimulated by a need for light and fanciful designs to express the gay, pleasure-loving, and romantic nature of the courtiers.

In court life, the upper classes found both their pleasure and occupation. The art of entertainment reached a high degree of perfection. As Perkins (1897) says on page 389 of Vol. II:

> No business cares, no irksome reflections on the problems of existence distracted the thoughts of those who believed that the object of life was to secure its pleasures. Nowhere could there be less question as to whether life was worth living, the place and grounds were beautiful, every luxury was furnished that wealth could produce.

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